Songs from Many Rooms

Songs and words by Owen Brennan.

These songs were never written to follow a plan. They arrived the way memories do - suddenly, unexpectedly, sometimes with a laugh, sometimes with a lump in the throat or silent tears. I've always written by following whatever compels or excites me in the moment, trusting that the future will reveal itself in its own time.

I came to understand that a song can outlive the writer or singer by generations. Looking back now, I can see that every song, no matter how different in style or setting, belongs to the same house. These are songs from many rooms, each one holding a piece of the life I've lived, the people I've loved, and the places that shaped me.

It began on a Meenaward doorstep in the summer of 2000, when I wrote a poem about my godmother Annie. I didn't know it then, but that was the first time I tried to honour a memory by giving it a voice. Two decades later came *Their Dancehall Days*, a song for my parents - a way to smile at their youth, their love for each other, and the joy they carried through life. Those early pieces taught me something important: songs can keep people close, even when time moves on.

From there, the rooms multiplied. The things I hadn't experienced, I could vividly imagine or try to inhabit for a moment. Some songs are bright with young love - backseat nights, 8-track players, summer breezes, the thrill of a glance that means more than it should. Others live in quieter corners: the ache of unspoken feelings, the tenderness of missed chances. And then there are the songs rooted in place - Donegal hills, dusty delta roads, bridges that hold their secrets. These pieces aren't about solving mysteries;

they're about honouring the emotional truth that lingers around them.

If there's a thread running through all of this, it's memory. Not nostalgia for its own sake, but the kind of remembering that keeps people alive, that turns ordinary moments into something worth holding. I write to preserve the things time tries to cover up - the red rust gate, the dancehall glow, the laughter in a diner, the bliss of an August afternoon. I write to bless the past, not to explain it.

This book gathers those songs together - the playful ones, the tender ones, the ones rooted in family, and the ones shaped by imagination. They come from different rooms, different seasons, different versions of myself. But they all share the same heartbeat: a desire to honour the moments that made me, and the people who walked beside me, whether for a lifetime or a single summer.

I felt I could create better songs if I had an artist in mind so I created the personas of Éireál and OB Branán to carry my vision.

If you find yourself in any of these rooms - and they may look very like a room in your own house - if a line reminds you of someone you loved, or a place you miss, or a feeling you once carried, then the songs have done their work.

Welcome in. The door's open.

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